

New Hampshire Climate Change Action Plan
Climate Change Policy Task Force
Action Plan Development Process

This memo lays out the framework for developing a concrete and implementable New Hampshire Climate Change Action Plan that includes aggressive but achievable state climate change goals. The process outlined below has been designed to enable the Climate Change Policy Task Force to assess the range of actions that the Working Groups will develop in the coming months.

The Action Plan development process will rely on the Working Groups in the initial phases to identify the climate change mitigation and adaptation actions of high interest and to refine the corresponding policy/program design and implementation strategies. The work will later shift to the Task Force, which will develop a draft Action Plan Outline with a list of potential recommended actions and which will ultimately develop and approve the final Climate Change Action Plan. The Department of Environmental Services (DES) will provide support throughout the process.

The Climate Change Policy Task Force will not establish aspirational goals for the state's total CO₂ emissions at the outset of the process. Instead, the Task Force will first focus on identifying the information needed to determine the most appropriate goals for New Hampshire. This will include input from the Working Groups and analysis by Climate Solutions New England and this information will be developed in an iterative fashion.

The Working Groups will begin by identifying those actions that will lead to the maximum achievable reductions in (1) CO₂ emissions or (2) vulnerability to climate change impacts. The Working Groups will prioritize these lists of actions from high to low interest and then evaluate the technical, economic, statutory/regulatory and social potential for implementation for each measure in order of priority. The focus on potential is not to restrict the number of actions considered but to determine which actions can be taken in the near term and to identify the obstacles that must be overcome to achieve more advanced reductions in the future.

The Working Groups will use this evaluation to complete a detailed set of policy/program designs and implementation strategies for as many actions as time and resources allow using a standard template (attached). Those actions that have been evaluated and completed for submittal will then be categorized as follows:

1. Actions that have a high potential for successful implementation.
2. Actions that have a medium potential for successful implementation due to a low degree or number of technical, economic, statutory/regulatory or social obstacle.
3. Actions that have a low potential for successful implementation due to a higher degree or number of technical, economic, statutory/regulatory or social obstacles.

These categories will be used to identify those actions that could be immediately undertaken (High Potential in 1, above) to achieve reductions in CO₂ emissions or vulnerability to climate change impacts. The list will also be used to identify the challenges that would need to be overcome and the questions that would need to be answered in order to implement the medium and low potential actions and achieve further reductions.

The combined impacts of the achievable CO₂ emission reductions will be used to quantify the gap between what New Hampshire can achieve and the goals advocated by scientists, policy makers and the surrounding states. To close this gap, the Working Groups will identify the obstacles that limit greater state action and prevent further reductions. This obstacle analysis will enable the determination of an additional set of actions necessary to overcome those impediments and enable the achievement of more substantial emissions reductions in the near and long term.

Starting in May, DES will begin assembling the preliminary lists of sector-specific goals and actions identified by the Working Groups as well as the contributions made by the public. This set of goals and actions will be delivered to the Task Force at their third meeting on May 19, 2008, at which time the Task Force will conduct an initial sorting of this preliminary list. At its fourth meeting on June 17, 2008, the Task Force will complete its preliminary review of the submitted Working Group goals and actions, initiate the development of a draft Action Plan Outline, and give further consideration to the identification of potential aspirational reductions in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

DES will use the outcome of this process to develop a draft Action Plan Outline that will describe the immediate programs and policies that could be implemented, as well as a set of actions that would require intermediate action. This outline will be submitted for public comment along with specific, but yet to be identified questions to which we will seek responses from the public. Comments on the Outline will be gathered at public hearings conducted at four locations around the state between July 7 and 18, 2008. Comments may also be submitted via mail and email for a specified length of time. These comments will be integrated into a more detailed Outline that will propose coordinated implementation strategies for the specific actions. This final Outline will be reviewed and approved at the fifth and final Task Force meeting in early August.

The state goals will be formulated after consideration of the projected impact of all of the actions. The final Action Plan that will effectively include two components: those specific measures that could be taken in the short- to mid-term under the existing technical, economic, statutory/regulatory and social context; and a set of “transformational” actions, the implementation of which would require the removal of obstacles that prevent the development of those actions as a second set of mitigation and adaptation actions. This latter set of actions is likely to be for longer-term CO₂ emission and climate change impact vulnerability reduction.

DES will then complete the drafting of the final report, which will be based on a format that is currently under development, and Task Force members will submit it to the Governor by September 1, 2008. The completed plan will provide a blueprint for what all of New Hampshire can do to reduce GHG emissions, including specific action steps for energy generators, industry, businesses, government, and homeowners. The plan will map out an integrated implementation approach focused on the actions that New Hampshire can take to reduce emissions and vulnerability to climate change impacts now as well as the actions that would enable additional measures to become achievable and result in long-term, large scale reductions. The execution of this plan is intended to reduce the state’s emissions and vulnerability to climate change impacts while helping the state to become more competitive and meet the challenges of the 21st century.



